Chapter III

INDIAN ENGLISH FICTION AND KAMALA MARKANDAYA

India enjoys an enriched heritage of different genres of literature - drama, poetry and fiction. R. Parthasarthy does not seem to be correct when he says Indian verse in English did not seriously begin to exist until after the withdrawal of the British from India. But reality lies somewhere near the statement that Indian literature like many other literatures of the world, too has undergone many changes. This shows that Indian English literature is in the making through the emergence of new traditions, by means of a process of negation and assimilation. Earlier English literature was qualitatively different from the present ones and centred on issues of a relatively peripheral nature. Indian English literature has steadily been enriched by shifting patterns and new traditions.

Masterpieces like *Untouchable, Kanthapura, The Guide, All About H. Hatterr, Midnight’s Children* and a large number of good novels which stand the test of time are sufficient proof for the maturity this genre seems to have attained.

Like the novel form in our regional literatures, Indian English novel too had its origin towards the end of the nineteenth century. An organic product of the concrete socio-political-cultural environment of the epoch, as K.S. Ramamurti, convincingly shows in his *Rise of the Indian Novel in English* (1987), this “twice born fiction” has been developing, with many ups and downs, over the years, through continual searches and experiments, towards a nature art form genuine and credible. It is quite clear that the central artistic concern with the Indian English novelist has always been to develop an Indian form of the novel and not merely to write a novel on Indian reality in English.

Bankim Chandra Chatterjee’s *Rajmohan’s Wife* (1864), Mulk Raj Anand’s *Untouchable* (1935) and Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* (1938) deal with the real social and political problems of the then India. Both of these novels speak of social reforms. Novels published in the period from 1935 to 1960 delineate the experience of the colonial age and dilemmas of post-independent reality. The writers of the thirties and forties – Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, K. Nagarjan and K.S. Venkataramani, and K.A. Abbas, Ahmed Ali, Humayun Kabir, Kamala Markandaya, Khuswant Singh, Nayantara Sahgal of the fifties – have more or less spoken about the realities of colonial and post-colonial India. Novelists of Rushdie’s generation – Vikaram Seth,
Amitav Ghosh, Shashi Tharoor, Upamanyu Chatterjee etc. – are the makers of new patterns and traditions. Among most of these novelists are those who are settled in the West. As a matter of fact, they are struggling to give pattern to their new destiny. In their novels these novelists depict the post-colonial world plagued by neo-colonial catastrophe like economic disorder, social malaise, governmental corruption and state repression. Some of the sensitive writers responded to these by migrating to less repressive and more comfortable lands.

The development of Indian English fiction may be classified into four phases. The works of the pioneers are imitative of British models. This early phase may be called ‘The Phase of Imitation’. The second one is “The Phase of Indianisation”. It began with the works of Toru Dutt in the last three decades of the 19th century. The third phase is called “Increasing Indianisation”. In this period writing in English acquired a national consciousness and even became popular in the west. The last phase is “The Phase of Experimentation and Individual Talent”. It is remarkable for the growing confidence and originality in the writing of Indian English writers.

There is a great variety of works which have appeared during the last two hundred years in English on Indian life. They range from *Departmental Duties, The Light of Asia, Kim and A Passage to India* to *Gitanjali, The Untouchable, The Guide* and *The Serpent and the Rope*. Some of them were written by Englishmen, others by Indians. Some were original works while others were translations. Some were translations of ancient Indian writings while some were free translations by Indian writers of their own original works in Indian languages. Some others were translations by Indian scholars of famous works in Indian languages. Some have represented India as a land of Maharajas, naked *faqirs* and snake-charmers while others are faithful representations of Indian life and thought. Some have chosen to express their feelings in verse while others have expressed themselves in ‘the other harmony of prose’. In modern times plenty of good novels, short stories, biographies and autobiographies have appeared in English in our country. The only genre which is not well represented is drama. Some of the prose is written in chaste English such as is spoken at Oxford and Cambridge; some are written in Babu English, while some others have tried to bring into their expression the rhythms of their mother tongues. It is, therefore, necessary to classify these works and define the terms which are to be used for the different types of writings.
The earliest writing on Indian themes in English was by Englishmen who came to India as journalists or educationists or Administrators or even as guests of the Maharajas. Many of them became interested in Indian life and wrote poems or novels or short stories with Indian characters and an Indian background. The creative writing about India in English by Englishmen is called Anglo Indian Literature. Thus the poems, short stories and novels of Rudyard Kipling are a part of Anglo-Indian literature. A great work in this category is *A Passage to India* by E.M. Forster. These writers mostly described Maharajas or zamindars or Indians educated in England or petty Indian officers or clerks or *khansamas* or *chaprassis*. This literature only touches some aspects of Indian life and that too superficially. They tried to interpret Indian life to the west. But they were often prejudiced and save a perverted view of Indian society.

The term ‘Indo-English Literature’ used to denote translations into English of works originally composed in the languages of India. Scholars like Prof. Gokak have further divided it into ‘Classical Indo-English Literature’ and ‘Modern Indo-English Literature’. In the case of Classical works the translator has a lot of liberty. He can elucidate and simplify the text and put it in a form in which the modern reader can understand and appreciate it. The rendering need not be literal. The translation should be faithful to the original but at the same time it should be readable in modern English. The translator has also to bear in mind the taste of the modern readers. These translations are very useful to persons in foreign countries and even in India who cannot read our ancient literature in Sanskrit or Pali.

The person who undertakes the translation of great works written in modern Indian languages into English enjoys much less liberty than those who are dealing with ancient texts. He has to remain faithful to the original. He must try to convey the spirit of the original in as appropriate words as possible. He should depart from the original only when the idiom of English and the association of English words make it inevitable. These translators render a great service not only to foreigners but also to millions of educated Indians who cannot read any language other than the one spoken in their own region. The educated classes all over India can read and appreciate works in English. So instead of translating a Tamil novel, for example, into India’s numerous languages it is better to translate it into English. In this way the work becomes known all over India and in other parts of the English speaking world. This will remain so as long as an Indian language like Hindi is not universally
accepted in India and does not get the status of an international language. It is true
that the number of Indians who can read and speak English is very small in terms of
the percentage of the entire population. But the fact remains that English is the only
link-language in India and books translated into English are read by educated people
all over India. Persons who are translating the great works of literature written in the
languages of India into English are, therefore, doing a great service to Indian art,
literature and culture.

These translations, however, suffer from one disadvantage; they reverse the
normal process of translation. The normal process is that the language in which the
translation is done should be the mother tongue of the translator. Thus an English
scholar who has made a special study of Malayalam should translate a Malayalam
novel into English. Similarly, a literary man whose mother tongue is Hindi and who
has made a special study of English literature would be in the best position to
translate an English novel into Hindi. But unfortunately, very few Englishmen cared
to study India’s languages and so the translation into English has to be done by
those whose mother tongue is the language from which the translation is to be
made. The translator has, therefore, to be very careful about English grammar and
idiom.

But the translation of great poems or plays or novels in regional languages
into English by other writers is different from the translation of a classic into English
by the author himself. Thus the great writer of a great classic in Telegu may also
have a great command over the English language and he may translate his own
work into English. His translation will be a free rendering of his ideas into English.
The original is not slavishly followed but is improved and altered according to the
genius of the English language. This can be called transcreation rather than
translation proper. It is something between translation and original creation. The best
example of this is the Gitanjali in which Tagore made a free translation of his Bengali
poems. Since the original has been written by the author himself he does not
hesitate to make any changes that he considers necessary in the new language.
Tagore made changes in the original poems and in some cases he combined two or
three poems into a single poem in English. In other cases he split one original poem
into several English poems. His transcreations were considered by the world as
original poems and he was awarded the Nobel Prize. Tagore’s translations of his own
poems are, therefore, to be considered as a part of Indian English Literature.
Original writing in English by Indians on Indian themes has been called Indian English Literature or Indo-Anglian Literature by different critics. The authors may be Indian by birth or ancestry or nationality. The term 'Indo-Anglian' was coined by J.H. Cousins. But many critics like M.K. Naik say that it is not a happy expression. It suggests a relation between India and England and not a relation between Indian life and the English language. They prefer to call it Indian English literature. All the same, Indo-Anglian continues to be a popular term to describe original writing in English by Indians to Indian themes. This should be regarded as a part of Indian literature.

Another term which was current for a short while was 'Indo-Anglican' literature. Prof. Iyengar has told us that a London printer thought that the term 'Indo-Anglian' was absurd and so he changed it to ‘Indo-Anglican’. But the term makes no sense and has not been adopted by anyone.

Indo-Anglian literature is now nearly 175 years old. It started shortly after the establishment of the East India Company as the rulers of a large part of India. In 1809 C.V. Boriah wrote *An Account of the Jains* in correct English. This seems to be the first original book written in English by an Indian national. Henry Derozio published his volume of poems in 1823 and Kashi Prasad whose published his volume of poems entitled *The Shair and other Poems* in 1830. These poets are important not because they are great poets but because they wrote their poems many years before English was prescribed by the Government as the medium of instruction in Indian schools and colleges.

Lord Macaulay, who was chiefly responsible for the introduction of English education in India, is often branded as an imperialist whose aim in introducing English in India was to produce an army of English knowing Clerks who would help the British in administering the country and exploiting her. This is actually far from the truth. By deciding that English should be the medium of our education, Macaulay did a great service to India. In 1823 the government appointed a Committee to consider the question of the type of education to be imparted to Indian youths. The members of this committee were all imperialists and they wanted that India should remain in the middle ages and should not get the benefit of western education. They, therefore, suggested that education should be imparted through the regional languages and Sanskrit and Persian should be the main subjects of study. If they had succeeded in their efforts we would have remained unenlightened barbarians forever. Patriotic and
far-sighted Indians protested vehemently. Petitions were sent to the Government requesting that “the best and-most modern European education” should be imparted to Indian students through the medium of English. Enlightened reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy started schools in which English was the medium or instruction. The introduction of English education was demanded by most of the educated and enlightened Indians of that day.

Lord Macaulay was a member of the Governor-General’s Executive Council and he was entrusted with the task of framing a policy for Indian education. His ‘Minutes’ on the subject form a landmark in the history of Indian education. He decided that Western education should be imparted to Indian students through the medium of English. This was one of the wisest decisions taken by the Government and it set India on the path of progress.

Giving the reasons for his decision Lord Macaulay wrote, “We have to educate a people who cannot at present be educated by means of their mother-tongue. We must teach them some foreign language. To those who said that Indians could never master the English language he replied, Macaulay’s recommendations were accepted by the Government in toto and in March, 1835, it was decided that public funds would in future be used only for education through the medium of English.

The Indians started learning English very enthusiastically. One reason was the lure of Government service for which English education was a passport. But acquaintance with English language and literature broadened the outlook of the students. English became a window to Western ideas and influences; English literature inspired the love of freedom and opened their eyes to the miserable condition of their motherland. People started feeling that they must shake off the foreign yoke and liberate their country. They also developed a scientific and rational approach. Narrow religious, provincial and caste prejudices were gradually shaken off. People in different parts of India spoke their own languages but English became the common language of India. This made India one nation. The knowledge of English also enabled Indian students to learn science very easily. This enabled India to emerge quickly from medievalism and enter the modern age of science and technology.

India had a strong tradition of poetry in all the regional languages, and so when the poets learnt English they started writing original poetry in the English
language. We have already seen how Henry Derozio and Kashi Prasad Ghosh wrote poems in English even before the Government decided to make English the medium of instruction in our schools and colleges. A little later, a lot of original English poetry came from one family — the Dutts. The first of these was Michael Madhusudan Datt. He was a good Bengali poet but/ his ambition was to be recognised as a good English poet. Two volumes of his poems were published — *Visions of the Past* (1848) and *The Captive Ladie* (1849). He was influenced by the English romantic poets of the early 19th century and by Homer and Dante. He made use of Indian imagery and took material from Indian myths and legends. Shoshee Chander Dutt published his poems under the title *A Vision of Sumeru and other Poems*. He tried to achieve Indianness by bringing into his poems Hindu gods like Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. He also makes frequent references to classical mythology.

The most distinguished poet in this phase of Indo-Anglian poetry was Toru Dutt. She was a real genius. Her first collection of poems was produced when she was only nineteen years old. These are translations of a few hundreds of French poems. But she attained fame with her collection of poems entitled *Ancient Ballads and Legends of Hindustan* (1883). This includes poems on the old stories of Sita, Savitri, Dhruva, Prahlad, etc. These Indian themes were treated for the first time in first rate poetry in English. This young girl gave promise of a remarkable poetic talent but unfortunately she died at the age of twenty-one. Her early death was a irreparable loss to Indian literature.

Another talented poet who wrote during the closing years of the century was Manmohan Ghosh. One collection of his poems — *Love Songs and Elegies* - was published in 1898 and another collection — *Songs of Love and Death* — was published in 1926 after his death. Most of his poems express his personal sorrow and sense of loneliness. His poems are lyrical and technically perfect. He was the brother of the great poet and sage, Aurobindo Ghosh. George Sampson calls him “The most remarkable of the Indian poets who wrote in English”.

A number of good Indian poets emerged with the dawn of the new century. The first was a young lady — Sarojini Naidu. She was a very talented lady. She acquired a wonderful command over the English language and became a very good speaker and writer. She became an associate of Mahatma Gandhi and took a leading part in the struggle for India’s freedom. After our independence she became the Governor of Uttar Pradesh.
As a young girl Sarojini wrote poems in imitation of British poets. She sent her poems to a British critic, Edmund Gosse, for advice. Gosse saw her talent and gave her very good advice. He advised her to give up the use of British imagery and not to imitate British poets. He advised her to be a genuine Indian poet and to reveal the soul of India to the West. She took the advice seriously and started writing about Indian characters and scenes that appealed to her. Some collections of her poems were published under the titles *The Golden Threshold, The Bird of Time, The Broken Wing, The Festival of Serpents* etc. She expresses the joy of life in poems which are lyrical and at the same time perfect in rhyme and metre. She does not use her poetry to convey any deep philosophy of life. Her poems appeal to us for their lyricism and their picturesque descriptions of familiar Indian scenes.

Rabindranath Tagore was the greatest poet of modern India who won international fame and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. He was a Bengali lyrical poet but his poems were translated into all the principal languages of India. He himself ‘transcreated’ some of his original Bengali poems and these were published as ‘Gitanjali’. For this he was awarded the Nobel Prize. He cast a tremendous influence not merely on Bengali poetry but on the literatures of all the languages of India. Tagore is one of the great lyric poets of the world. His thoughts and beliefs and his imagery are all Indian. According to C. Paul Verghese the main features of his poetry are “its humanistic essence combined with spirituality, a love of nature and man, and the expression of the beauty and splendour of the earth. The poet’s spiritual message does not, however, enjoin us to run away from the ‘fret and fever of life’ and seek shelter in a hermitage, but insists on our full participation in the joys and sorrows of life. Stress on Tagore’s mysticism has led to a neglect of his poetry as poetry, it has tended to obscure his greatness as a poet and artist. He perfected a kind of incantatory rhythmic prose and demonstrated that Indian sentiment, thought and imagery can be expressed in English as well as in any Indian language”. Tagore placed Indo-Anglian poetry on the world’s literary map.

Aurobindo is known to most Indians as a mystic and sage. Very few people know that he was a powerful poet and he not only wrote in English but wrote only in English. His poetic career stretched from 1890 to 1950. He wrote lyrics, narrative poems, philosophic poems and an epic. His poems are very lyrical and contain beautiful Indian imagery. He has a great mastery over English metres and blank
verse. His Savitri is a great epic on the Hindu myth of Satyavan and Savitri. A note of deep spirituality pervades all his poems.

Many Indian poets have been active in the post-independence era. In 1958 a number of poets led by P. Lai founded the Writers’ Workshop. The other important poets of this movement are P.K. Saha, Narendra K. Sethi and Monika Verma. These are all city poets and they have no touch with the masses. The ‘Workshop’ was very helpful to the poets in publishing their works. The other good poets are Nissim Ezekiel, Dom Moraes, Kamala Das, A.K. Ramanujam and others. They are all making good contributions to Indo-Anglian poetry.

Unlike poetry and the novel, Indo-Anglian literature is rather poor in drama. Indo-Anglian drama had an early start but it has not made good progress. The first Indian play in English, The Persecuted appeared as early as 1832 but it was not followed by good plays which could be acted on the stage. Rabindranath Tagore and Aurobindo Ghosh wrote a number of good plays but these are symbolic poetic plays which are appreciated more in the study than on the stage. People in normal life do not talk in poetry and so it appears unnatural for characters in a play to converse with one another in superb poetry, Tagore wrote in Bengali and in the original the plays have an abundance of sweet music. In plays like Chitra, The King of the Dark Chamber, Sacrifice and others Tagore took the old Hindu myths and gave them a new symbolic significance. They charm audiences with their musical qualities. But when the plays are translated into English the dialogues appear to be neither natural nor musical. However, some of his plays like The Post Office and Chandalika have been successful in the English version both as plays and as ballets. Tagore’s plays are great as symbolic poetry and not as drama.

Aurobindo Ghosh also wrote many plays in English. His famous plays are Perseus Eric and The Deliverer. He wrote in blank verse such as that of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Since his characters could not have spoken English in real life, the dialogue of these plays appears to be artificial.

Aurobindo’s plays can be read with great delight but they cannot be acted. They insure the readers with their deep spirituality and are not meant only to entertain an audience.

Other Dramatists - Some other Indian writers have tried to write verse drama in English. G. V. Desani wrote Hali and Bharati Sarabhai wrote The Well of the People. They are good as poetry but they are not great drama. Harindranath
Chattopadhyaya’s *The Proclamation* also does not have life-like dialogues. Kailasham is a great dramatist in Kannada but his English plays like *The Brahman’s Curse* based on Hindu epic themes are deficient in characterization as well as dialogue.

The practice of great modern dramatists like Shaw and Galsworthy has shown that prose is a better medium than verse for modern drama. But the Indians who have taken English prose as the medium for their plays have also not produced any outstanding work for the stage. Harindranath Chattopadhyaya’s *Five Plays*, Rahamin’s *Daughter of India*, A.S.P. Ayyar’s *The Slave of India*, cannot be called great plays. The prose dialogues, instead of being natural, appear to be flat, artificial and dull.

Four dramatists have, however, succeeded in writing good dialogues. The first is Pratap Sharma. His *A Touch of Brightness* is very successful on the stage. Gieve Patel’s dialogues in his *Princess* are more life-like because he gives a local colour to the conversation. Nissim Ezekiel is successful in his dialogues because he introduces characters who have been speaking English in real life. His *Nalini* and *The Marriage Poem* are very interesting plays. Santha Rama Rau has made a very successful dramatic adaptation of E.M. Forster’s novel, *A Passage to India*. With real dramatic sense she has selected those situations and dialogues from the novel which make the play spring to life.

Thus the problem of a proper dialogue for Indo-Anglian drama has not been solved yet and this is the biggest stumbling block in the progress of drama. A lot of plays are being written in English in India but a really great play having life-like characters, dramatic situations and natural dialogues is yet to be written.

The Indo-Anglian or Indo-English literature is different from the Anglo-Indian literature. The former is the genre written and created by the Indians through the English language; the latter is written by the Englishmen on themes and subjects related to India. The Indo-Anglian literature, therefore, is very much associated with Indian English — “the evolution of a distinct standard — a standard the body of which is correct English usage, but whose soul is Indian in thought, colour and imagery, and now and then, even in the evolution of an Idiom, which is expressive of the unique quality of the Indian mind while conforming to the correctness of English usage. It is illustrative of a social type of language phenomenon — a language
foreign to the people who use it but acceptable to them because of political and, recently, cultural reasons”.

The period between and after the Freedom Struggle has been the most fertile period. Anand brought to India the new technique of the stream-of-consciousness. Raja Rao adopted the autobiographical form of narration. Plot and characterization were also enriched. There was larger quantity and better quality. We have the social, the rural, the detective, the historical, and the romantic type of novel.

Other luminaries who have enriched the Indo-Anglian fiction are Khawaja Ahmed, Bhabani Bhattacharya, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Mrs. R. Prawer Jhabvala, Lamber Mascarenhas, Mrs. Vimla Raina, Khushwant Singh and others.

In spite of diversity in themes and techniques, the Indo-Anglian fiction has some common features, namely, the presentation of a personal narrative against the background of modern Indian history, the conflict of values between the family and the individual, and the awareness of social change. The conflict between the West and the East or between Innovation and Tradition is a perennial theme in Indo-Anglian fiction.

The Indo-Anglian writers of fiction write with an eye and hope on the western readers. This influences their choice of the subject-matter. That is why in Indo-Anglian novels there are Sadhus, Fakirs, Caves, Temples. Vedanta, Gandhi, Rajahs and Nababs, etc — that is to say, there are subjects that interest the Western audience. They represent essentially the Western idea of India. But at the same time there are elements of Indianness: Nationalism and Patriotism, glorification of India’s past and sympathy for the teeming millions of the country, etc., speak of the Eastern orientation.

According to Prof. C D. Narsimhaiah, “the Indian novel in English has shown a capacity to accommodate a wide range of concerns: in Mulk Raja and a humane concern for the under-dog, not just a pre-occupation with economic determinism; in R. K. Narayan the comic mode as equivalent to the tragic in his evocation of mediocrity; and K. Nagarajan surprises by his sensitive handling of the human significance in the religious and the logical labyrinth so characteristic of Hindu society. I While Raja Rao recaptures the magnificent mythical imagination of Indian antiquity successively in the three novels and short stories he has written to date he has at the same time, to use T. S. Eliot’s words, ‘altered’ the ‘expression’ to accommodate a distinct, profoundly Indian ‘sensibility’. One sees this in different
degrees in the writings of Sudhin Ghose, Desani and Ananthanarayan. The women writers especially Kamla Markandaya, Santha Rama Rao and Anita Desai have a fine eye for the urban scene. Bhawani Bhattacharya and Khushwant Singh, in very different ways, give us valuable insights into the pathos of economic impoverishment, mal-distribution of wealth and human degradation caused by political upheavals”. The wider canvas of the Indo-Anglian canvas can also be seen by a study of typical themes and characters. The range has been more widened by inclusion of untouched themes. Malgaonker’s The Distant Drum is the only novel about army life in Indo-Anglian fiction.

The most prominent technique of narration in the Indo-Anglian fiction is the first person narrative. The central character or the hero is the narrator of a novel. This technique is seen in many novels such as Raja Rao’s The Serpent and the Rope, Manohar Malgaonker’s The Princes, Nayan Tara Sahgal’s A Time to be Happy, K, Nagarajan’s The Chronicles of Kedaram etc. We also find a large number of novels written in the third person narrative, e.g. works of Mulk Raj Anand. Ahmed Ali’s Twilight in Delhi, and Narayan’s Waiting for Mahatma, Manohar Malgonker’s A Bend in the Ganges. R. K. Narayan in The Guide has combined both the modes of narration.

In modern literature in the West myth is becoming a powerful instrument of literary structure and creation. India has a rich treasure of myths and legends. The Indo-Anglian fiction has imported the technique of the creative use of myth. The Radha Krishna legend is a recurrent myth in Raja Rao’s The Serpent and the Rope. There is the use of the myth in Narayan’s The Maneater of Malgudi. In the Old Woman and the Cow, Anand uses the myth of Sita’s fire-ordeal as part of his technique. Similarly Sudhin Ghose’s The Cradle of the Clouds is also remarkable for its use of myth.

As regards the medium, that is the English language, it is not yet perfect. Anand’s English is what Khushwant Singh calls ‘Mulkese a liberal and evocative use of Indian words, literal translation of Indian idioms and abuses’. Raja Rao has created an Indian Sanskrit rhythm in the syntax of English. Raja Rao says: “We cannot write like the English. We should not. We cannot write only as Indians. We have grown to look at the large world as part of us. Our method of expression, therefore, has to be a dialect which will some day prove to be as distinctive and
colourful as the Irish or the American. Time alone will justify it Khushwant Singh himself follows Mulk Raj Anand in respect of language.

So far as the themes of the Indo-Anglian fiction are concerned, they are: social problems (Anand, Khwaja Ahmad Abbas); domestic problems (R. K. Narayan, Mrs. Jhabvala, Kamla Markandaya); sex (Khushwant Singh’s I shall not Hear the Nightingale, and Narayan’s The Guide, Manohar Malgaonker’s A Bend in the Ganges, and Nayan Tara Sahgal’s The Time of Morning and Kamla Markandaya’s A Silence of Desire and Two Virgins.) In the words of Kai Nicholson, “Sexual relationships between men and women in post-independence Indo-Anglian literature are interpreted pluralistically. The intensity with which sex is depicted, depends to a great extent on the novelist’s utilisation of examples from English literature and how he interprets it to fit into Indian circumstances”.

The themes of happiness and fulfilment through suffering and sanyas is also recurrent in the Indo-Anglian fiction. It is found in R. K. Narayan’s The Guide, B. Rajan’s The Dark Dancer, Raja Rao’s The Serpent and the Rope and Bhawani Bhattacharya’s He Who Rides a Tiger. Politics also inseparably and the subject-matter of the Indo-Anglian fiction from 1920 to 1950, The mood of comedy, the sensitivity to atmosphere, the probing of psychological factors the crisis in the individual soul and its resolution, and above all, the detached observation, which constitute the stuff of fiction, were forced into the background. The political theme as a matter of choice was very much influenced by Gandhi’s role and philosophy. These themes are the struggle for independence, the Indian National Army, The Indian Army, the present-day politics, the debacle of princely India, the partition and independence. Raja Rao’s Kanthapura and The Cow of the Barricades, K. A. Abbas’s Inquilab, R. K. Narayan’s Waiting for the Mahatma, Anand’s The Sword and the Sickle, C. N. Zutshi’s Motherland, Aamir Ali’s Conflict, Zeenut Futehally’s Zohra, Manohar Malgaonker’s A Bend in the Ganges and many others. These novels deal with Gandhi, his way of achieving freedom, revolution, Satyagrah and ‘Quit India Movement’ etc. Some other novels related to politics, especially the post-independence politics are Nayan Tara Sangal’s This Time of Morning, Khushwant Singh’s Train to Pakistan, Manohar Malgaonker’s A Bend in the Ganges, Attia Hossain’s Sunlight on a Broken column, etc

East-West counter as the major theme occurs in the novels such as Raja Rao’s The Serpent and the Rope, J. M. Ganguly’s When East and West Meet
(1960), S. K. Ghose’s *The Prince of Destiny*, K. S. Venkatramani’s *Murugan the Tiller*, B. Rajan’s *The Dark Dancer*. Meenakshi Mukherjee, summarising the themes of Indo-Anglian fiction writes as follows: “The Indo-Anglian have explored the metaphysical, spiritual and romantic aspects of the confrontation each in his or her own way. Even when the novel does not deal directly with the Forsterian theme, the personal crisis in the life of each Western-educated hero or heroine becomes inter-cultural in nature”. Then there are other stray themes of love, murder, village life, erotic love, etc.

Some recurrent characters in the Indo-Anglian fiction are the anglicised Indians, Mahatma Gandhi, the Indian Princes or Rajah, the Sahib or the Englishman, the Eurasian, the Muslim, the Saint or Swami, the suffering woman, etc.

The novel was a late comer in Indo-Anglian literature but it is this sphere that the greatest progress has been made. Up to the end of the 19th century there was hardly any novel written by an Indian a English and now there are novelists like Mulkraj Anand, R. K. Narayan and Raja Rao who are read all over the world. This is not surprising because, unlike poetry, there was no tradition of the novel in India and present-day India with her infinite variety and her multifarious problems is a fertile ground for the growth of the novel.

In the 19th century English was used as the medium for serious discussions by Indians on social, political, religious, economic and educational problems. Raja Ram Mohan Roy wrote very powerful English to advocate various social reforms in India. But nobody thought of writing fiction.

The first writer who wrote proper novels was Ramesh Chander Dutt. He wrote his novels in Bengali but some of his novels were translated into English. His *Slave Girl of Agra* (1909) is a historical romance of the time of the Moghul rulers of India whose capital was Agra. The next writer who deserves our consideration is Bankim Chandra Chatterji. He was a powerful novelist. He wrote his novels in Bengali. He gives a realistic picture of the social and political life of Bengal in the 19th century. He specially shows the miserable condition of women in Hindu society. His novels have been translated into all the principal languages of India and some of them have been turned into popular movies. One of his novels was originally written in English. This was *Rajmohan’s Wife* (1904). While describing the social conditions of India Bankim Chander emphasized the virtue of self-sacrifice which was necessary to free India from foreign yoke. His novels show that Hindu society can
only be reformed if women are emancipated and there is discipline and order and fear of God among the people.

Although Tagore was mainly a lyrical poet he also made an important contribution to the development of the novel and the short story. Two of his great novels which have been translated into English are *Gora* and *The Wreck*. *Gora* is the story of British parents who are killed in the mutiny. He walks into an Indian home and is brought up by an orthodox Hindu family. He becomes a great nationalist and freedom fighter and brings about reforms in the society around him. *The Wreck* is written on the theme of marriage. Brahmo Samaj which was a reformist movement of educated and enlightened Bengalees forms the background of this novel. The novels contain powerful characters and throw a flood of light on the social, political and religious condition of Indian society in the early years of this century. Tagore has written a large number of short stories which have all the characteristics of good short stories. Each of them contains a few memorable characters and a dramatic situation. Some of his famous short stories are *The Cabuliwallah*, *The Babus of Nayanjor*, *Home Coming*, etc.

The young poetess Toru Dutt was a real genius. She not only wrote great poetry but also a romantic novel called *Binaca or the Spanish Maiden* in her early teens. This is a remarkable work and showed promise of much greater things to come which never came because she died at the age of twenty-one. S.K. Ghosh wrote a good romantic novel called *Prince of Destiny*.

As time passed the novel form became increasingly popular with creative artists. Mahatma Gandhi’s movement for the uplift of the Harijans, the emancipation of women, the awakening of the masses and the freedom of the country inspired many novelists. These were the themes of K.S. Venkataramani’s two novels — *Murugan, The Tiller* (1927) and *Kandan, The Patriot* (1932). Mulk Raj Anand started writing his great novels in the thirties. In *The Untouchable* (1935) he showed how badly the Harijans, specially their women, were treated by the high caste Hindus. In *Coolie* (1936) he gives a graphic description of the downtrodden people of the Punjab. His novels give us an insight into the way the people live, talk, think and behave in rural Punjab. His novels are a very valuable contribution to Indo-Anglian literature. Raja Rao wrote *Kanthapura* in 1938. He shows how the freedom movement spread among the people of a remote village in South India. A noble young man, Moorthy by name, spreads Gandhiji’s ideas regarding untouchability,
charkha, Khadi, boycott of toddy shops, non-cooperation with the foreign government and non-payment of taxes, among the people. The Government tries to suppress the movement by taking repressive measures. The land of the villagers is sold to outsiders. There are lathi charges and firings. Someone sets fire to the village. The survivors go and settle in another village. The sufferings and sacrifices of people like these villagers finally brought freedom to India.

Another very successful novelist who came up at this time is R.K. Narayan. He took Malgudi as the setting of his novels. He has written many novels including Bachelor of Arts, Swami and Friends, The Financial Expert, Mr. Sampath, Maneater of Malgudi and The Guide. The Guide has been translated into several languages and has also been turned into a popular Hindi movie.

This trio — Mulk Raj Anand, Raja Rao and R.K. Narayan — has made the Indo-Anglian novel known all over the world.

A large number of good novels have been written in English in India since our independence. Khushwant Singh wrote Train to Pakistan in which he described the horrors of the partition of India. Manohar Mulgaonkar wrote A Bend in the Ganges on the same theme. His Distant Drum dealt with life in the Indian Army in British days and then after independence. Bhabani Bhattacharya wrote So Many Hungers dealing with the Quit India movement, the Bengal famine and the political, social and economic exploitation of the people. He also wrote another interesting novel called He who Rides the Tiger. Kamala Maricandaya wrote a fine novel entitled Nectar in a Sieve in which she described rural life in South India.

Mrs. Jhabwala, a European lady who married an Indian, written a number of interesting novels based on her observations Indian life. The chief among them are To Whom She will, The Householder and Heat and Dust. Shanta Rama Rau has written an interesting novel called Remember the House. Anita Desai in her two novels, Cry, the Peacock and Voices in the City and Arun Joshi in The Foreigner have tried to explore the psychology of their characters. They deal with the problem of the loneliness and rootlessness of many modern men and women.

One prominent name among the new novelists is that of Chaman Nahal. His novels are My True Faces, Azadi and The English Queens. This last novel is not an account of British queens but a humorous account of the Mem Sahibs of the Anglicised families of modern India.
Indian English novel has a late beginning. It began to appear in the 1920s and gathered momentum in the following two decades. When India became free Indian English novel and already established itself as a branch of literature. The ideals of Indian struggle for freedom are reflected in many novels. 1960s and 1970s are remarkable for a huge output of Indian English novel. To get a Mulk Raj Anand, Rao and R.K. Narayan into consideration.

Mulk Raj Anand is one of the most prominent Post-colonial English writers in India.

The other notable figure of the ‘founding trio’ of the Indian novel in English is R.K. Narayan.

Besides Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raja Rao, there are also Bhabhani Bhattacharya, Manohar Malgonker, Khushwant Singh, Shashi Deshpande, Kamala Markandaya, Anita Desai, Nayantara Sahgal and many more. All these novelists have considerably enriched Indian literature.

Manohar Malgonkar, another prominent novelist of the post-colonial era depicts the tragedy, the despair and heroism of the Indian struggle for freedom in his novels. *Distant Drum* is the story of Indian Officers’ love affairs. In this novel we are in the present and also in the heroic days of the World War II. *The Princess* is romantically treated, *A Bend in Ganges* (1964) describes the freedom struggle of the Indian nationalists in the background of the Japanese invasion on British Asian territories in the World War II.

Khushwant Singh, a Sikh journalist and diplomat, is also famous as a novelist. In his novels social theme is treated comically. His *Train to Pakistan* and *I Shall Not Hear The Nightingale* are famous novels. These novels deal with the fortune of Sikh family and are tragic in character. Dr. Bhabani Bhattacharya is a well-known Indian English fiction writer. He has won the *Sahitya Academy Award* for his novel *Shadow from Ladakh*. The main theme of his novels is the problem of hunger and human degradation. So *Many Hungers* presents the real picture of the Bengal famines during World War II. *He who Rides a Tiger* powerfully deals with the problem of hunger and human dignity. *Music for Mohini* deals with caste distinctions and poverty. *A Goddess named Gold* is a realistic presentation of Indian village life. *Shadow for Ladakh* deals with the Indo China conflict.
A remarkable development in this sphere of novel was the early arrival of the female writers to the ranks of the novelists. It was a time when women in India were mostly a repressed lot and female literacy was rather low. The novels of these women pioneers were mostly autobiographical expressing their private agonies.

Toru Lata Dutt did the work of a pioneer among women novelists of India in English. She wrote two novels: *Le Journal de Mademoiselle d’ Arvers* in French language and *Bianca: or The Young Spanish Maiden* in English. She wrote *Bianca* in 1874 but it was published serially in *The Bengal Magazine* from January to April in the 1878 by her father, for she died young before completing it. *Bianca* is a love-tragedy modeled after French romances of the 19th century, cast in autobiographical mode. The other contemporary English novels by women writers were Raj Laxmi Devi’s *The Hindu wife or The Enchanted Fruit* (1876); *Kamla*, a story of Hindu life (1894) and *Sagina*, a story of native Christian life (1894) by Karupabhai Sathianathan; *Ratna* (1885) by Sevantha Bai Nikambe; *The High Caste Hindu Women* (1886) by Ramabai Saraswati.

The women novelists who produced novels and short stories at the beginning of 20th century were slightly better equipped. Prominent among them were Swarna Kumari Ghosal, Iqballunnisa Hussain, Ishwari and Cornelia Sorabji. Swarna Kumari Ghosal has three novels to her credit: *The Fatal Garland* (1910), *An Indian Love story* (1910), *An Unfinished Song* (1913). Iqballunisha wrote *Purdah and Polygamy* (1944) which highlights the evil of keeping the women within the four walls in a Muslim household. Ishwani *The Brocade Sari* written in 1946 and published a year later in London under the title *Girl in Bombay* again records the plight of women in a Muslim household and suggests ways of ensuring a better living for woman. Cornelia Sorabji did not write any novel. She wrote three volumes of short stories, *Love and Life Behind the Purdah* (1901), *Sun Babies* (1904) and *Between Twilight* (1908). In addition to these she published two other books – *India Calling* (1935) and *India Recalled* (1936), both of these are valuable pieces of social criticism each in its own way. All these novels and short stories follow the autobiographical mode and aim at social reform.

Though these women writers could not produce satisfactory and truly good novels, they dealt with variegated aspects of life. Their real contribution lies in making the novel an instrument of social reform and social regeneration. It was, however, in the post-colonial era that the women novelist of merit began to equip and
enrich the novel with substantial output and artistic excellence in themes and techniques. It was a time when Indian English novel had grown to maturity having established itself as an independent literary game through the contribution of Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan and Raj Rao who set the trend of an Indian novel comparable to its counterparts anywhere in the world.

These women novelists who made their presence felt in the post-colonial era were mainly influenced by the feminist movements that have shaken the very foundation of the traditional social values. They concerned themselves with everyday Indian life, its customs, traditions and culture and above all the clash of the traditional Indian culture with the imported western values and ideas. These novelists have a traditional as well as a modern outlook at the same time and are often highly self-conscious and sometimes even embarrassed on account of it.

The independence of India which was preceded and followed by much struggle, conflict and turmoil, resulting from the events such as the second world war, partition of India and its aftermath, fall and merger of princely states and the memory of freedom movement have served either as a background or as reference in their novels. The concepts of individual, family, home and society as these underwent change; and the new culture that involved out of the impact of western outlook and ideas-a culture that thrilled Asghar that disappointed Nehal: “New ways and ideas have come into being. A hybrid culture which had nothing in it of the past was forcing itself upon Hindustan, a hodge-podge of Indian and western ways which live (Nehal) failed to understand” also run through the novels of these writers writing in English.

Another significant contribution of the Indian women novelist to the development of the novel lies in the issue of new techniques. They adopted new methods to their experimentation with varied type of fiction and disciplined their artistic sensibility to obtain better craftsmanship.

Some of these Indian English women novelists were not very prolific and each of them produced just one or two novels such as In Transit (1950) by Vinu Chitale, Zohra (1951) by Zeenut Fatehullah, Sunlight on a Broken Column (1961), by Perin Bharucha. These women novelists could not secure for themselves the prominence of a creative novelist as they confined themselves only to a panoramic account of the life lived in Hindu, Muslim, Sikh or Parsi households. However, they adopted modern fictional techniques and style of presentation. The variegated modern strategies and
subjects were used with greater awareness and dexterity by the later novelists like Kamala Markandaya. Ruth Prawer Jhabvala, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai and Santha Ram Rau.

With *Remember the House* (1956) Santha Ram Rau “emerged as an important novelist of the post-independence India, trying to hold a mirror to the problems of shifting values in changing society.” She added one more novel, *The Adventuress* (1970) after a gap of fourteen years to her contribution to the Indian English fiction exploring the great modern problem of human survival in an uncertain world torn by the World War II. These novels together definitely won her a place along with Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal and others but a little lower than that of Raja Rao, R.K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand and Manohar Malgonkar.

The high stature Rama Rau was supposed to attain was somewhat marred by the rather thin quantity and the singular formalistic quality of her novels. As a novelist, she has written autobiographical novels with a picaresque form, portraying a wandering protagonist. In her treatment of human situation, she is concerned more with the existential problem of woman in search of her identity rather than with sociological or political aspects of life. She makes her hold on her readers by her elegant and graceful style. The real distinction of Rama Rau as a literary artist lies in her being a writer of travel literature. She is supposed to be one of the best writers of travelogue. Her travelogues and personal memories like *Home to India* (1945), *East of Home* (1950), *This is India* (1954), *View to South East* (1957), *My Journey* (1959), *Gifts of Passage* (1961), *Cooking of India* (1969), established her reputation as a distinguished Indian writer in English. Her travelling experiences have such a lasting influence on her writing that even her novels are considered “Travelogue in the garb of novels”.

The other prominent novelist of this period Nayantara Sahgal made her distinguished contribution to Indian English fiction by using a political situation as a background to her fiction and painted against it the story of human life. *Kanden, the Patriot* (1927), is supposed to be among the first Indian political novels in English besides Raja Rao’s *Kanthapura* (1938), Khwaja Ahmad Abbas’ *Inquilab* (1955) and Mulk Raj Anand’s *The Sword and the Sickle* (1955), which are also considered as political novels in the sense that their settings, characters and plots are grounded in politics. Since the writers of these novels could not evolve political novel as a genre, Nayantara Sahgal used the political situation as a background for an essentially
human story as she herself claimed when interviewed by Rama Jha: The political situation is the background of my books. I noticed that nobody in India; at least writing in English has used the technique of having a political situation - a specific political situation as a backdrop of every single novel. There have been novels of political situation-isolated ones, but I have developed this as a genre, as a whole style of political novels which uses political background but tells a story of human life against it.

Nayantara Sahgal's various novels present their entire political situation of the post-colonial India and give an account of what happens in the corridors of power, in the drawing rooms of the politically important people or in the lobbies of the parliament. *A Time to be Happy* (1958) presents a more faithful picture of the period of the arrival of independence. *This Time of Morning* (1965) is full of political activities at a time when things have turned to ugliness; *Storm in Chandigarh* (1969) deals with the partition of Panjab on linguistic lines just when the state had recovered the trauma of the 1947 partition and *A Situation in New Delhi* (1977) is concerned with the political situation of Delhi that arose after the death of Jawaharlal Nehru- the politicians losing the moral values and the frustrated youth turning Naxalites. *The Day in Shadow* (1973) deals authentically with the high-level politicians and bureaucrats wrapped up in their cocktail parties, worried more about themselves than about the problems of the country.

As Sahgal was born and passed her childhood in a political atmosphere, which had produced eminent politicians, her personality as a writer was shaped by her intimate knowledge of India's politics and political leaders among whom Ghandhiji's influence was vital and "the idea of non-violence is reflected in every single novel that she has written". Besides her work is also influenced by Marx, Lenin and Orwell's Political Prose.

Having been nourished on the ideals of both East and West, it was natural for her to use the east-west encounter as a substantial background for her novels. Her novels cover the post-independence India when the Britisher's had finally left India, but the Anglicized Indians continued the tradition of their erstwhile rulers. The westernized Indian is caught in a cultural shock when he seeks his identity. Sanad Shiv Gopal in *A Time to Be Happy* and Sir Arjun in *This Time of Morning* are the most significant examples. They passed through a crisis. After a period of intense living through adverse situations that lead to self-analysis, these characters get back
their balance. On the other hand, the eastern values are constantly watched and weighed-against the dynamic western Thought and are sometimes found insufficient to provide all the answers. She suggested that an adjustment be made which is based on practical reasoning and self-assessment. A psychological approach based on realistic episode is the method that Sahgal adopts when she depicts the east-west encounters in her novels. Sahgal was virtually a writer who, like her contemporaries presented the changing pattern of Indian politics and society and wove into it subtly and intricately the subject of the emancipation of women as also the problems that they face context of experience artistically transformed into fictional art.

Her heroine Simrit Raman in *The Day of Shadow* (1971) faces the prejudices in a male dominated society. As she is divorced by her husband, she grows close to Raj, an idealistic member of Parliament who shares her values. She asserts herself as a writer and makes a human bond with Raj. The more ghastly inhuman acts inflicted upon women are dealt frankly and creditably in *Rich Like Us*, Her latest novel *Time for Departure* established her position as one of the important novelists of the post-colonial India. As an indomitable champion of honesty and sincerity Sehgal pleads for a basic honesty in relationships whether they are of man and woman or of the ruler and the ruled.

If Nayantara Sahgal popularized political novel in Indian English fiction, Jhabvala enriched the novel by her ironic studies of domesticity and society of the post-colonial India. Irony is the best source of her comic as well as satirical portrayals of the contemporary Indian social life, lived and dominated by the newly rising commercial class. Irony helps Jhabvala to bring to the fore the snobbery, the pretentiousness, the hypocrisy, the corruption, the materialism, the hollowness of money oriented civilization and the emotional poverty of an affluent society beneath their superficial graces and decorum of social life. The use of irony in her work is not restricted to verbal irony or the irony of situation but covers the Jhabvala is not an Indian by birth and upbringing. She lived in India fortuitously after her marriage with a Parsi Indian architect, yet as an artist she is an Indian who has made India the centre of her fictional world and transmuted artistically the Indian social life which she has experienced and observed at close quarters in a way that demonstrates her insider instance. She employed her rich experiences of the modes and techniques of eighteenth century English drama and fiction to her careful observation
of life and manner in India. The influence of Jane Austen is evident in her early novels, especially in her delineation of the Indian leisured middle class, in her ways of looking at life with the ironic detachment and also in the settings and themes of her stories.

The delineation of an effective background is Jhabvala's forte and the aspects of the novel are subordinated to it. She gives a minute and detailed description of every scene and situation in her novels. She even goes sometimes in excess in her portrayals that it often blurs and deteriorates the reality much to the irritation of the reader. The first eight of her ten novels cover her Indian career as a novelist. The first five novels centre upon the Indian social and domestic problems while the later three deal with the problem of European emigrants in India. Jhabvala realistically portrays contemporary Indian society caught up not only in transition from tradition to modernity but also in cultural fragmentation. Of course "her basic literary endeavour is to portray the human potent of this society caught up in the conflict of change". The newly rising commercial middle class of urban India living in joint families in and around Delhi is mainly the representative of this change. This superficial sophistication and westernization became the main target of her satire. Westernization in their case is limited to the decorum of their houses and social etiquette, deep down they are still Indians of antiquity both in outlook and style. Their dilemma is portrayed objectively in an ironic mode through her novels. The early three novels To Whom She Will (1955), The Nature of Passion (1956) and The Householder (1960) are cast in the tradition of the comedy of manner and the characters are laughed at for the incongruities inherent in them. Get Ready for Battle (1962) gives the grim picture of poverty, the exploitation of the poor and the helpless by the rich, the powerful and the corrupt. Esmond in India (1958) is based upon the familiar east-west problem which is subtly and ironically treated in A Backward Place (1965). In A New Dominion (1972) Jhabvala endeavours us to present realistically contemporary India in its social, cultural, religious political and spiritual contexts. Her last novel Heat and Dust (1975) presents a wholly materialized picture of India, even the Swami is absorbed in sexual pleasure and money-making.

Jhabvala was not an Indian, yet she succeeded in presenting the conflicting human relationships in Indian society with a keen and observant eye. Khuswant Singh cited her along with R.K. Narayan when he attempted to identify the "two best novelists of India" in 1961 and called her "The adopted daughter of India".
Anita Desai began with a new trend of Psychological fiction which added a new and significant aspect to Indian English fiction. Her approach to Indian life and her fictional technique distinguish her from her contemporary women novelists. With nine novels and a number of short stories to her credit, she is one of those influential writers who dealt with modern life in all its complicated aspects. She has won a number of awards for her various novels. Her thinking and writing show an impact of Emile Bronte, Virginia Wolf. D.H. Lawrence, Henry James, Proust, Dostoevsky, Chekov, Kawabala and Hopkins.

Anita Desai like Arun Joshi, departs from the traditional pattern of novel and presents her character in conflict with the mind rather than with society. The social concern however is presented in the form of cultural polarisation and in a conflict between traditional values and westernized ideas. But they are worked through the development of the mind. Of course her novels reflect social reality but "she does not dwell like Anand on social issues; and rather delves deep into the forces that condition the growth of female in patriarchal male dominated Indian society".

Desai paid primary attention to the Characters and subordinate the background of this primary interest. She designed a small world of psychologically trapped characters in a shapeless and meaningless existence of everyday life which adds to their neurosis and drives them into despair. She focuses in the main on her female characters and penetrates into their psychic depth and captures their psychic state at a crucial juncture of their life. Her female characters are hyper sensitive and highly imaginative women who prefer living a recluse life in their created illusory world of dream and imagination, as either they are unwilling or fail to cope with the reality around them. Maya in Cry the Peacock (1968) and Monisha in the Voices in City (1985) preferred death to adjustment with what they had around them. Maya in Cry the Peacock (1968) and Monisha in the Voices in City (1985) preferred death to adjustment with what they had around them.

Highly individualistic and lovers of liberty, Anita Desai’s protagonists have a different set of values ad opinions from those around them and embark on a long voyage of contemplation in order to find the meaning of their existence. Sita in Where Shall We Go this summer (1975) and Sarah in Bye Bye Blackbird (1971) are able to find some meaning and are back to their previous existence to give into the demands of their husbands. Similarly Nanda Kaul in Fire on the Mountain (1977) after having her share of living a lonely and alien life on the mountain is
unconsciously pulled back into her sequestered world. They wander and arrive at a juncture where they find the significance of their urgency. It is Bim in *The Clear Light of Day* (1980) who realizes fully the meaning of her existence and cultivates in her love, understanding, forgiveness and mutual acceptance for those around her. She is successful in her quest for liberty and identity.

Anita Desai blends various themes at a time, such as loneliness resulting out of alienation, withdrawal, fatality, decay and degeneration, violence and bloodshed; illusion and reality: alienation and revolt and finally the protagonist's search for identity. These are born out for the existential problem of alienation of the emancipated modern woman through disharmony in marriage and various other relations. Her characters seem to be looking for a meaningful existence; a communion and communication with those around them and struggle hard against heavy odds. Each character from Maya to Nanda Kaul tries seriously but it is only Bim who comes triumphant against the challenges.

To bring together authentically a psychological realism an intensified impressionism and a quickened multiplied consciousness, Anita Desai employs the stream of consciousness technique, flashbacks and interior monologues in her novels. As her forte in the psychic presentation of individual human beings, the narrative is rightly allowed to move freely and not to get clogged by blocks and patterns artificially imposed from outside. She adopts a design, a pattern and a style which has not been drawn from tradition. She prefers pattern to plot which works out naturally and inevitably as the story progress and lends artistic unity to her novel. Each of her novels has its own individual structure as well as each is a unit of the others. Her novels are happy examples of the fusion of form with content and texture with structure.

Despite her various significant achievements, Anita Desai is not an answer to the problems of the typical Indian novelist in English. She limited herself to the well-to-do section of society avoiding the common illiterate Indians and their ordinary problems. Yet ignoring her limited scope, one can conclude that Anita Desai has done something new by presenting the dilemma of modern, individualized man and woman. She is one of those writers who de-established something of the novel of the past and built a new structure with its remains.

It was, however, Kamala Markandaya who surpassed all her contemporary women novelists by contributing to the following fruition of Indian English fiction with
themes of wide and varied interests and variegated techniques to tackle the complexities and tensions of contemporary Indian Life. Kamala Markandaya's experience of the two cultures and ways of living contributed to her development as a novelist. She is ranked among the prominent post-colonial novelists of Indian English like Mulk Raj Anand, R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, Bhabani Bhattacharya and Manohar Malgonkar, H.M. William called her the “most gifted” and Niroj Banerji places her beside the Big three - Anand, Narayana and Rao” for thematic and technical maturity and continued growth of mind and art in her novels. Markandaya is the most accomplished and distinguished among post-colonial novelists. Markandaya concentrates on post-colonial, social, political, cultural and economic problems of Indian life. Intercultural and interpersonal relationships have been the major preoccupation of her novels. She does not confine herself to creating artistic pictures of life of a peculiar community, class or society.

Kamala Markandaya's range of fiction is wide and varied. She never restricts herself to portrayal of one particular section of society. On the contrary, she has presented pictures of life from lower to higher strata. Her protagonists have been drawn from rural to urban; from peasants to princes and from the poorest to most affluent sections of society. Her woman struggles hard against all odds put forth by nature as well as an unjust social order. She neither gives herself completely to man’s pleasure and slavery nor does she deny the importance of nurturing, child bearing and warm familial relationships, whether it is a peasant woman like Rukmani Nectar in a sieve or an upper class western educated woman like Mira Some Inner Fury Markandaya's woman learns to live between the twin pulls of tradition and modernity and strives to build a healthy society, caring for all those around her. Thus, Markandaya's fiction has a purpose behind it, besides being a work of art. It is virtually because of this that Markandaya is distinguished and acclaimed throughout the English reading world.

Kamala Markandaya was born at Chimakurti, a small south Indian village in 1924. She belonged to a Hindu Brahmin family. She was named Kamala Purnaiya. Kamala Markandaya is her pen name. As an average south Indian girl she also adopted traditional Hindu Culture and values. Her father was a transport officer in Indian Railways. He influenced Kamala by his broad and liberal opinion. She took advantage of travelling with her father. As she was a great observer and sensible girl, she had a very good travelling experience. She travelled not only Madras and
Mumbai but also England and Europe. She had a deep desire to bring out these travelling experiences before the world in a book form.

Markandaya received his education casually and in different schools of Mysore. He studied history at the University of Madras from 1942 to 1947. Because he wanted to express himself deeply, he worked as a journalist. During the Second World War he served as a military liaison officer. After the world war, she returned to independent journalism and lived in Mumbai, Madras and other places. In 1948, he decided to go to England to pursue his dream of becoming a writer. There, he did some strange work like proofreading because he could not get a fix on any newspaper. He continued to write until the publication of his first novel, Nectar in a Sieve, in 1954. Finally, he established himself as a writer. He married an Englishman named Bartrend Taylor and moved to London as an expatriate. After a few years of marriage, she gave birth to a girl named Kim Oliver, who lives in England. Her husband died in 1986. She wrote under the pseudonym of Kamala Markandaya even after becoming Kamala Taylor.

Kamala Markandaya was a very intelligent and attractive woman. He had a very pleasant and seductive personality. She was not only a successful writer, but she was also active on many fronts. He has organized television programs, lectures on B.B.C. and became interested in the theater. Although he adopted England after his marriage, he retained his identity as an Indian writer. Her views on racial hatred in England were quite clear. When Kamala Markandaya was studying in the University of Madras in 1942-1947, India was a conquered colony of the English. Kamala Markandaya witnessed social, political, cultural and religious changes of the time.

It is universally acknowledged that Indian culture is one of the most ancient cultures in the world. It is full of diversities. There are people of different caste and creeds, customs, religions and ways of living. During the final phase of Indian freedom struggle, there occurred many social changes in Indian society under the impact of west. The English imposed new land revenues on Indian farmers. This forced the people remain without land and food. British rule brought the Industrial revolution to India, changing traditional rural life. Industrialization consumed the area of fertile land and the people of rural India were forced to become labourers. Young men moved off the land to earn money in factories and workshops instead of by growing crops. This impact of industrialization reinforced the theory of materialism.
in Indian society. Joint families began to shatter into nuclear one. The condition of women was also miserable. They were considered the second rate citizens. There were social evils as child marriage and Satipratha etc. that hampered the development downtrodden, the destruction of agriculture by the progress of industrialization were thoroughly studied deeply by Kamala Markandaya. These miserable conditions of Indian people touched the soul of Kamala Markandaya and formed her social vision.

When Markandaya was growing up and attending college, India was governed as a conquered colony of England. The people of India were tired of the injustice imposed on them cruelly by the Britishers. The political atmosphere of the country was passing through uncertainties. The freedom struggle was on its apex. Many freedom movements were being organized under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi, a prominent leader of the world wide recognition. He influenced the people of Indian society for Independence or Puma Swarajaya. Every citizen was eager to be a part of the struggle and sacrifice his life for the sake of country. The spirit of nationalism was running high in the veins of Indians. But this spirit of nationalism was lost soon after independence in 1947. As a result, there was a division of India in the form of Pakistan (a Muslim state) and India, (a Hindu state). It led way to political terrorism, and communal riots. These problems pushed the country back. Even Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated on 30th of January 1948, because of this uncertain political atmosphere. Kamala Markandaya, being a sensitive girl was aware of this turmoil as she kept her self touched with the happenings in the country through newspapers.

Being a south Indian Brahmin, Kamala Markandaya adopted traditional Hindu culture and values by birth. The British wanted to establish them firmly in Indian soil. They introduced their educational system and culture in India. The exploration of western culture was resulted in cultural clash between the rural India and urban India. India's exposure to the west in post-colonial times caused significant change in cultural attitudes of many of her people. Some of them stuck to their native cultural values and traditions while others preferred the western way. But there were some who attempted to westernize themselves but were uncomfortable with it in their heart of hearts. All these nuances of cultural transition were minutely observed by Kamala Markandaya. Though she shifts India for England, her attachment with native culture knew no bounds.
He wrote without any inhibition or hesitation against the British regime, its politics and its diplomatic relations with India. She was a progressive writer who worked sincerely on the development of the English novel. In 1974, he received the Asian Award for his high quality work.


*Nectar in a Sieve* (1954) is the tale of the trials and tribulations of a peasant couple Rukmani and Nathan. It explores the themes of hunger poverty and misery-the relentless logic which compelled man to violate the established codes of morality and the disintegration of village life under the impact of industrial change. *Some Inner Fury* (1955) explores the east-west theme on a larger scale against the political background of India during Quit India Movement of 1942; *A Silence of Desire* (1960) exhibits the conflict not only between superstitious faith and scientific surgery but also between social sanity and a crippling fake spiritualism. *Possession* (1963) against takes the east-west theme showing the conflict between materialistic possessive west and the spiritually, non-possessive east as also between the secular and divine sources of art.A *Handful Rice* (1966) portrays the disastrous consequences of poverty. The *Coffer Dams* (1967) presents a confrontation between the modern machine civilization and an ancient tribal culture making use of the east-west theme. *The Nowhere Man* (1972) deals with the problem of alienation, mirroring the general predicament of coloured immigrants, like Sriniwas and Vasantha - the main characters of the novel in England. *Two Virgins* (1975) gives us an in-depth study of the problem of growing up into an average woman of an average family in contemporary India. It depicts the clash of values between village and city and tradition and modernity.

*The Golden Honeycomb* (1977) deals with historical events that took place during British rule. It is also regarded as a historical novel as it follows a certain chronology in recording the dates and years of the events. In it we come across a series of touching events, pitiable strikes, baffling agitations and lockouts. *Pleasure city,* (1982) is also structured on the same theme as *A Silence of Desire* and *The
Coffer Dams shows the slow and steady encroachment of western science and technology on the remote coastal regions of India lying in the lap of nature and enjoying a calm and quiet beauty of their own.

All these novels of Markandaya deal with the transitional phase of Indian society in all its complex manifestations. She seeks to examine India’s transition from a traditional society to an urban industrial metropolitan society in all its comprehensiveness. All these novels present a cross-section of India depleting the characters belonging to different strata of life. In each successive novel, Markandaya shows a growing thematic maturity.

Markandaya does not merely show growing maturity in the selection and treatment of her themes but also in the skillful management of plot and character. She adopts diverse techniques which are in keeping with the plots, narrative patterns and characters of her different novels. As far as the technique is concerned, she does not show any experimentation and innovation like that of Raja Rao or G V. Desani. Rather her techniques show wonderful adaptability to various moods and styles and in that lies her virtuosity and authenticity as a novelist. Her diverse methods grapple with wide and varied experiences of life remarkably and transmute them skillfully into an artistic whole. The first three novels *Nectar in a Sieve, Some Inner Fury* and *Possession* are stories told by a character in reminiscential mood. The other seven have a third person narrator.

Markandaya has adopted a dramatic form of fiction like that of Nayantara Sahgal. She presents graphically the Indian ways of life. Dialogue plays a significant role in the revelation of characters as well as in the progress of plots and stories in her novels. Usually her stories are complete in themselves and the plots are compact.

A remarkable feature of Markandaya’s fiction is her use of Chaste English. She has a natural affinity with the English language perhaps because of her long stay in England. She does not use English based on translation from Indian language; neither does she attempt to adopt the vernacular idiom or tone. She has such a firm grasp over the language that she can easily present in prose whatever she likes. Markandaya writes in an easy, flowing style which is free from superficiality and unwanted adornment. She moulds her style to suit the different traits and temperaments of her characters to express their varying moods, feeling and thoughts.
Kamla Markandaya is a socially committed writer and in her novels specifically deals with the issues of social importance. According to Cuddon, “A committed or engage writer is one who through his work, is dedicated to the advocacy of certain beliefs and programmes especially those which are political or ideological and in aid of social reform”. The time period when Kamala Markandaya worked on her fictional tales was of rapid social transformation and political and economic upheavals. Through her novels she registers her protest towards these issues. Obviously disturbances at social, political, economic and psychological level affected human relations, specifically man-woman relationship. Some of her novels are set in pre-independent India when the struggle for freedom was in force and some of them depict the picture of transformed India after independence. During colonial period problems and evils rampant in nation were of different nature while the problems of independent India were different in a number of ways. Kamala Markandaya tried to depict both these phases in her novels realistically. Her keen observations compels the reader not only to view the scenario but also to analyse the situation at depth. Majority of her novels have female characters as protagonists. All of them are unique in one sense or the other and are liked by the reader for their life affirming qualities. Such a portrayal of female characters by Markandaya highlights the changing role of women in the contemporary world. A few of her novels do not have female protagonists but the real essence of life is drawn from these characters. Their position in family and society affect the complex terrain of human relationship, at the centre of which there is always a woman. So it would be befitting to study the gradual change in women’s position to understand the changing strings of human relations.

Hunger and starvation is the recurrent theme of her novels like *Nectar in a Sieve*, *A Handful of Rice*, *Two Virgins* etc. Infact, hunger is the root cause of a number of social evils as a person with an empty belly undermines all ethical and moral codes of conduct. It obviously affects human relations because the emotional bonds which are the foundation of strong relations, get weakened under the pressure of extreme poverty and hunger. Kamla Markandayas novels do not depict merely a particular area or class but we could easily find in them rural Indians, urban middle class people, English people, servants, localities not only of India but also of London. In a way we could easily observe a cross-section of the then Indian society. Therefore the study of human relations could also be perceived at different levels.
Her novel *Some Inner Fary* describes political confusion of the Independence struggle. The patriotic feelings of the Indians and their hatred towards the Britishers have been projected through a series of conflicts among the members of a single family. Her novels *A Silence of Desire* and *The Coffer Dams* present East-west encounter in terms of human relations. Kamala Markandaya was born and brought up in India but settled after her marriage in England so the east-west conflict is the outcome of her direct experience. Obviously, rearing of people in different cultural milieu allows them to adopt different value systems and this difference become a hindrance in cordial human relations.

The theme of human relationship has been highlighted in *The Coffer Dams* through the attitude of Clinton, a British officer towards poor rural, Indian workers. Similarly, her novel *Possessions* throws light on the theme of human relationship and depicts the domineering western culture which has the tendency to exploit poor Indians for their own vested interest. *Her Nowhere Man* depicts the affect of the feeling of rootlessness on human relationship. When a person feels uprooted and maladjusted in a particular cultural surroundings, he psychologically gets tensed and disturbed. This situation obviously results into strained relationship. Sometimes in the process of acquiring western culture and values, Indians forget the limits of their own forebearance and circumstances become so tense that these begin to affect their relationship. The same thing happens in the *Two Virgins*.

Position woman in any society too decides the type and intensity of human relations. In fact, it is cardinal factor which decides the over all scenario of society. It is often noted by a number of eminent critics that since human civilization it has evolved, there is incessant ignoring of female, not only in India but across the world. The feminist outburst is the result of this process of subjugation from very ancient time. The things written either in literary form or given representation in history or sociology indicate merely the male centered approach. In a way it is ‘his’ story not ‘her’ story.

With the growth of feminine ideology, specifically in 20th century, a number of women writers began to express their feelings through literary discourse. Feminine psyche with its fear, anxiety, unrest began to be analysed in the work of literary artists. This process mainly began in India after getting independence in 1947. Writers like Rabindranath Tagore, Sarat Chand Chatterjee felt the need of attitudinal change towards women specifically in familial context. At least they for the first time
thought woman as an individual with craving for her own pleasures. Post independent India witnessed a boom in Indian writings in English, specifically of female writers. Kamala Markandaya also marked her presence and reinterpreted the position of woman in Indian society. Her women characters are in search of ‘self’ and ‘identity’ in a hostile world full of opposing forces. Each of her novel probes deep into human relations alongwith the change in the position of women in the post colonial world. She asserts that togetherness and mutual understanding can lead towards cordial relationship and meaningful existence in the world. Markandaya could feel the pulse of time and she has created the female characters who are neither staunch traditionalist nor ultra modern. Infact the novelist is in favour of neither rejecting the tradition completely not accepting modernity in its letter and spirit, rather she is of the opinion to honour the traditions and to welcome modernity because only in this way cordial human relations could be maintained. She interprets relationship mainly through family in the possibilities and mechanism of change in the individual and the society at large. Her women characters raise questions about the contemporary position of women in Indian society but they never condemn outrightly the existing system. Her field of enquiry is the social and emotional bonds that shackle women.

Kamala Markandaya knows the importance of social institutions like marriage and family therefore, she minutely observes the delicate string of relationship which infact, binds the overall fabric of society. Domestic life and integrity in family life become the important aspect of her novel, Rukmani Nectar in Sieve never loses faith in life or love for her family life, though for it she has to bear a lot throughout her life. Her emotional ties in maintaining her relationship with her husband and children always remain strong and she is capable of searching happiness by fulfilling her basic needs of food, clothes and shelter. Odds and calamities of life could not deter her and she successfully uses her binding influence and gives sustenance to her family. She witnesses a number of ups and downs in her life and even faces compulsive disintegration of her family but handles situations bravely by giving due importance to familial bonds of relationship.

Mira, the female protagonist of Some Inner Fury possesses some similarity with Kamala Markanadaya herself when she got married to Taylor and had settled in England. Here the theme of human relationship has been presented through two pairs Mira and Richard with their warm relationship and Premala and Kitsamy with cold relationship. Agitations during freedom movements affect personal relationship
between Indian women and Englishmen and things come to nothing in these relationships. In the end Mira gets ready to sacrifice her personal love for the love of the nation. The novel very well highlights that the disturbances at political, economic and social level are often responsible for changing the equation of relationship. Priorities in the life of human beings often guide the chair of relationship.

Sarojini of A Silence of Desire depicts the impact of silence on human relationship, specifically man-woman relation. Through the novel, she wants to highlight the point that happy relationship is possible only with mutual understanding, compromise and good communication between husband and wife. Suspicion begins to creep between Sarojini and Dandekar’s relationship even after 15 years of happy married life because they could not share what they should to keep the relation smooth.

Kamala Markandaya deals with the theme of human relationship in almost all of her novels and analysed its various shades from different angles. Her Possession is the analysis of Indo-British relationship. The characters of Caroline and Valmiki are rooted in their regional identities and oppressive and narrow mentality of Caroline lays hindrances in the cordial relationship of both of them Caroline is an autocraft, ambitious and determined type of British girl while Valmiki is a painter of genius from a south Indian village where caroline had gone to collect “arak”. She wants to possess him so she takes him to London and moulds him into a man, an artist and a lover after the image she has in her mind. Her love for Val is merely for fulfilling her sexual desires. Though Val is conscious in making human ties, she ignores them. By highlighting such a relationship, Markandaya wants to project the idea that such relationship in which one wants complete possession of the other could not be happy and satisfying. The novel seems quite appropriate at the time when India got freedom from colonial rule. In fact, the sexual ethic plays havoc in the backdrop of racial superiority, where a white woman is always superior to a blackman racially as well as politically.

A Handful of Rice too highlights the significance of social institutions like family and marriage as it has been depicted in Nectar in a Sieve. Nectar in a Sieve depicts rural economic condition while A Handful of Rice deals with urban economics. It is the story of Ravi and Nalini. Through a naket presentation of poverty and hunger, the novelist wants to project the idea that economic stress may disrupt the bonds of human relations. Hostile situations of life break up the bridges of
morality easily in human life but the familial bond provide the sufferer the strength to 
bear all these conditions. Nalini’s sacrificial nature and unconditional support could 
bring out Ravi from his kitiable condition. Thus the character of Nalini has been 
framed to show traditionality which sometimes proves useful in making the edifice of 
society strong.

Her novel *Nowhere Man* delineates the question of identity crisis of an elderly 
immigrant woman, named Vasantha. She lives with her husband Srinivas in England. 
They find it difficult to create their identity at their acquired land but could not 
succeed because strength of human relations also depends on the racial identities. 
No doubt Vasantha modifies herself by changing her manners, habits, deers etc. to 
adjust with the new surroundings but ultimately could not succeed in flourishing 
herself because people of land could not accept the ties of human relations from a 
woman of alien land.

Her *Two Virgins* highlights encroachment of modern western values on 
traditional beliefs and its impact on human relationship. It is the story of the two 
virgins Lalitha and Saroja and through them the novelist has tried to portray the 
impact of modernity on Indian girls. Their lives are shaped by the influences of their 
childhood environment. Lalitha is beautiful and bold with a sense of pride for her 
beauty. She is lured by the city and is dazzled by its glamour. Undoubtedly, her 
parents also made her realize that she is beautiful and smart and also give wrings to 
her flight. The liberty given to her by parents makes her blind to right and wrong 
decisions. On the other hand her younger sister, Saroja lives under the strong impact 
of the codes of traditional society represented by the conservative aunt Alamelu. 
Lalitha goes to the city in search of ‘identity’ but on the contrary loses completely 
whatever he possessed in her village. IN a fit of frustration she tries to commit 
suicide. All the traumatic experiences faced by her teaches her sister, Saroja who 
returns to her village and lives with her family. Here the parents-child relationship has 
been put to the centre. Had it been carefully handled, there would have not been 
such a tragedy in Lalitha’s life. Her parents gave freedom without making her 
capable of discriminating between right and wrong. Mother-father relationship has 
also been responsible up to an extent for this careless handling of Lalitha. Both the 
parents had been restricted to their domains so much as they did not think about the 
consequences of the rearing they had been giving to their daughter Lalitha. Saroja’s 
rearing was under the strict code of conduct of Alamelu. She has been checked at
different occasions and persistent supervision of her behaviour made her mature enough to face the challenges posed by the world. Through the novel, Kamala Markandaya unravels the complexities of inter-personal relationship which matters a lot when some one intensely searches for identity in new environment.

The major female characters of her famous novel *The Golden Honey Comb* are wise and strong in their own ways. The novel has a wider canvas and throws light on the varied shades of human relationship, getting affected by existing situations.

Though the novel depicts east-west encounters at political level and expresses Indians' feeling of hatred towards British Rulers yet novelist's purpose is to establish the fact that there is a need of harmonious relationship between the East and the west. It could be established if both of them have proper understanding.

The character of Mohini is modeled by the novelist on the lines of a bold and spirited woman who wants to lead life on her own condition. She loves freedom and to protect it, she does not succumb even to royal temptations. She loves Bawaji Ray but does not think marriage necessary ot prove her love. She refuses to submit herself to royalty as she is not swamped by the royal rarified atmosphere. She synthesizes in her the best of tradition and modernity and preserves her autonomy as an individual as well as a member of society. She becomes a system of independence along with her son Rabi, and Usha whom Rabi finally courts and establishes harmonious relations with to find solutions to various complex human problems. Mohini suggests the way for the future generation of women that can free themselves without involving informal and selfish relations with man. The character of Shanta Devi, the Queen of Devapur and legal wife of the king has been drawn as a foil to Mohini. Shanta Devi's relation with her husband dwindle merely to physical activity while Mohini has a hold over the Maharaja through her emotional ties and by becoming an anchorage to him whenever he faces any problem in life. Her bold and assertive nature changes the meaning of different relations in lives of those who remain around her. Relationship to her is not merely an emotional bond rather a support which one can rely on.

Mohini is one person before whom Bawaiji Raj-III is helpless. She is far-sighted and sensible enough to perceive the disadvantages that this promiscuous union of hers with the king might bring. She refuses to marry him because she does not want to be trapped into a normal marriage. She makes her lover realize that a
union merely based on sexual attraction is always vulnerable and transient. Bawaji Raj who has so far been immersed in his own desires and their gratification is forced to sit up and notice that the woman too has her feelings, her desires.

Mohini teaches the king to give equal treatment to women. She is quite volatile in nature and charming in appearance. She is fully aware that it is because of her physical charm that she has enshared the Maharajah. In any argument with him she often emerges rampant. Though she loves him deeply, she has the guts to face own and convince him of the validity of her point. She always asks the wrong to be fair minded. It is however difficult for the king and he feels recognized, yet he has to bid her free as she chooses to be. But he pleads with her to keep her affair away from his eyes and ears. However, the King’s agony and sadness is meaningless. Mohini is spiritually attuned to him though she torments him a lot: “For Mohini, there was and there would be no other Man”.

Mohini is completely loyal to her country and its people. She does not like the king to protect British interests at the cost of the natives. She also does not like his unflinching loyalty towards the foreign rulers. She usually calls Sir Arthur, “Bania Sahib”. She always tells the king that the Britishers are here for their financial and territorial gains, and that they are least interested in the uplift of the Indian people. She feeds her son on Indian legends. She teaches him a lot about the illustrious past of his ancestors and of his land. She helps Rabi develop into an independent being aware of the common humanity of man.

Mohini, thus, not only keeps herself and her spirit free from the role that tradition imposed upon the women of the royal family but also inspires others to imbibe the spirit of freedom and independence. She breaks away from the tradition of docility and submissiveness of the women of the royal family. She is brave enough to face the problems and risks involved in her unorthodox stance. Her ultimate reward is a taste of freedom that is denied to other members of her class.

The foregoing discussion shows that Markandaya’s women have come a long way from Rukmani to Mohini. They are thoughtful imaginative and visionary. They protest against allotting rights according to wealth, power and gender rather than plain humanity. With the exception of Rukmani (Nectar in a Sieve) and Nalini (A Handful of Rice) who face problems for want of money, her other women characters like Roshan, Mira, Anasuya, Mohini and Usha are successful not only in overcoming the inequalities, the invisible barriers against the female sex in the existing social
system, but also act as potent forces of social change by themselves. These women are capable enough to have vision of themselves with power to assert themselves in life, motivate others around them towards the welfare of the human race. They are painted so capable and courageous that even the male in their lives like Govind, Kit, Valmiki, Ravi, Nathan, Bawajiraj and Rabi do appear weak and incapable of fulfilling the traditional masculine role. They are failures as husbands, as protectors and as providers. Often it is the woman who shores up the male protagonist from collapse. *The Golden Honey Comb* is case in point wherein Rabi is helped and motivated by women – Manjula, Mohini, Jaya and Usha.

Markandaya’s women, in spite of deviation from the traditional mode of life, fully reflect the feminine sensibility. They have imaginative sympathy for the human race and contribute their share in nurturing and guiding humanity. Even Roshan, Anasuya, Mira and Usha though shatter “the false pedestal of the dependent woman, do not seek to substitute the limiting traditional concept of the female by an equally limiting feminist perspective, freezing themselves in reaction against men and family life”.